

THE BOURBON NEWS.

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AN AWAKENING.

BY PAUL DANBY.

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It was the building of the Juniata, Slatertown & Mercerville railroad that woke up Hank Black, but it was a few words said by a girl that he thought a good deal of at that time that first disturbed his sleep, so to speak. I happened to be in Graham's store, over in Slatertown, when Hank was disturbed, and I heard the disturbing words.

It was one Saturday night in August, some 12 years ago, Graham's store was crowded, inside and out. There must have been 40 or 50 in the store in front of the counters and twice as many on the sidewalk, waiting their turn to go in and buy. Behind the counters, besides Hank Black, Graham himself was working away in his shirtsleeves, Mrs. Graham was helping the best she could, and then there was Lucetta Allen, Mrs. Graham's unmarried sister.

It was close that night outside—seemed as if the heat from the sunshine or a mighty hot midsummer day had kind of got tangled up in the air like—and inside 'twas worse, for there was half a dozen kerosene lamps burning and the room was full of smoke from cheap cigars and clay pipes. Inside and out everybody was talking, mostly about nothing at all, as folks do when they go to the store, and Lucetta was pouring out some aniline dye while Hank was tying up sugar. I was standing by the counter, close to Hank and Lucetta, when she said, suddenly:

"There he is, Hank; and he is somebody. He can do things. You'd best look hard at him and see a man for once in your life."

Hank turned quick and upset the dye into the sugar barrel, and I got so interested in the mixup that I only got a glimpse of the chap the girl referred to. He didn't look to be much of a man to me, and I should never have given him a second thought, only for what I'd heard Lucetta say, though he did look different from the Slatertown young men. He was one of the civil engineers that was laying out the new railroad. Hank was so busy then that he didn't find out much about the chap till the next day, and then Lucetta told him.

Like most young fellows in Slatertown, Hank had a spry young horse and a buggy. Every Sunday afternoon he used to take Lucetta out in the buggy, and the next day he took her out as usual. Now, it so happened that this was the day he had fixed on to say something very particular to the young woman, and they hadn't gone very far before he said it. I don't know the language he used, but it amounted to asking her to marry him, though he took an awful long time to do it, and Lucetta, who was bound not to say a word till he had finished, thought he'd never stop. I know pretty nearly what she said to him, for she told me that very night, she being my cousin, and I being something like an older brother to her.

"I just turned and looked at him a little while, Cousin Jim, and then I told him something."

"Hank Black," I said, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You want to wake up before you ask any girl to marry you."

"Hank seemed a good deal surprised, and then I said, further: 'You think you are doing well because you're clerk in Graham's store, the biggest in Slatertown, and the whole valley, for that matter, and you feel sort of rich because you've got a horse and buggy and a little money in the savings bank and your wages have been raised from \$300 a year to \$250 a month.' All that seems worth while to you. But that young chap that came into the store last night earns almost as much in a month as you do in a year, and he isn't any brighter than you, either. He's awake, though. He's a man in the world. But you—you are asleep. You are like a beetle in its hole."

"When I got that far," the girl continued, "Hank braced up long enough to ask me if I thought the young engineer better looking or better natured than he was. But I wouldn't gratify him by telling him what I thought on those points, and I didn't say much more about anything. If I had I'd have cried, so I just asked him to drive home; and he did, without ever speaking a word."

When Lucetta had finished telling me about her talk with Hank I asked her to explain herself. But she made no explanation. She just turned a pair of big, blazing eyes on me, and said if I wanted to make out that I was as stupid as Hank I might try it, but she knew better.

Next day Hank quit. He said he'd had "enough clerking it in his," and advised Graham to find another man right away. Then Hank did what I thought was the dumbest thing he was ever guilty of. He never said good-by to Lucetta, but he went and hunted up that engineer and asked him if he didn't want to hire a chainman.

The engineer looked Hank over and asked him if his horse and buggy would go with him. Hank said it would, and was hired on the spot. That job lasted Hank most a year, during which he worked like a slave for two dollars a day, dragging chain and doing all sorts of odd jobs for the engineer, hauling him around in the buggy, and actually lending his rig for the engineer to take Lucetta driving. But never once did Hank himself speak or bow to her again. He didn't even let on that he knew there was such a girl, and once, when I thought, like a fool, that I could straighten things out by talking to him about her, he said that

the only Lucetta Allen he'd ever known was dead, and I wished I hadn't opened my mouth.

When the engineer told the young man he had no further use for him Hank broke all up. It was only for a minute, though, and then he asked the engineer why he couldn't take him along to his next job to make an engineer of him.

"Make an engineer of you, you thick-headed young cub? No one could do that. You're a good hand to lug chains and drive a buggy horse, but time isn't long enough to educate you."

I'd got acquainted with the engineer long before that. He wasn't a bad sort of chap, but he kind of looked down on folks that hadn't as much education as he had. He told me about Hank's wanting to be an engineer, and it tickled him a lot.

I began to see how the land lay, and I was going to hunt Hank up again, when one day he came into the post office here and said he wanted to talk with me all alone. Hank's a distant cousin of mine, too, you know, though he's no relation to Lucetta Allen.

Well, Hank made a clean breast of all his feelings to me. He said he'd found out that to be somebody he'd got to have an education. And he'd got to be somebody just to spite Lucetta, if for no other reason. He didn't want to marry her, as he had once, but he did want to show her that he could amount to something. He had sold his horse and buggy, and he had \$250 altogether, or thereabouts. He didn't know how much education he could get for that, but he was going to use it all up, and if it took more money would I lend him some till he could earn enough, being an engineer, to pay up?

I told him to come again a week later, and then I drove over the hills to Slatertown and talked with Lucetta. She begged me to help Hank, and insisted on giving me \$100 of her own money, which I was to let him have without telling him where it came from. I just had to take it, but I didn't let Hank have it. I banked it in her name, and then I told Hank to go ahead and go to school. He must earn as much as he could, but if his earnings and his savings fell short he could write to me and I wouldn't see him fail for the lack of a few dollars.

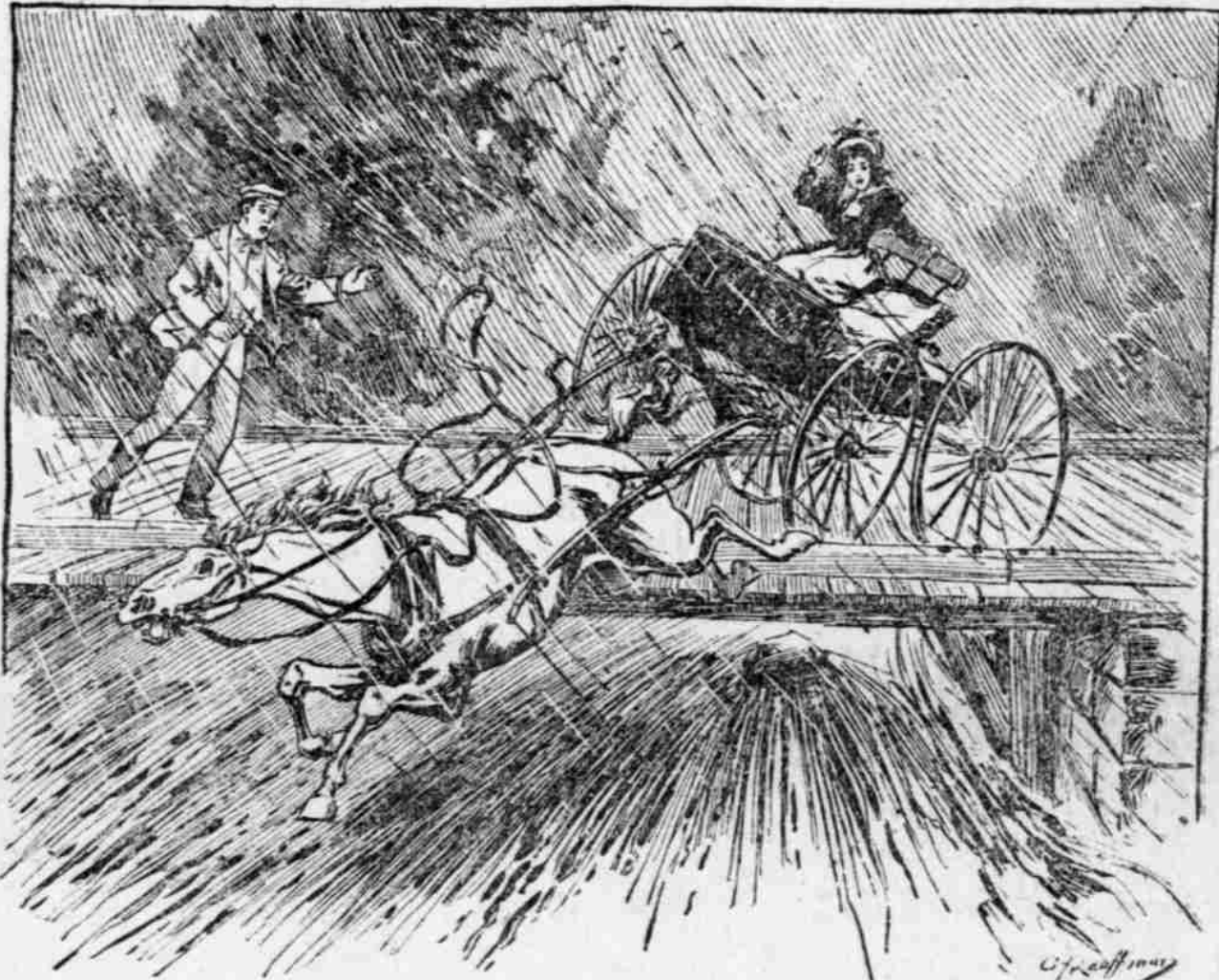
Well, he had a hard time of it. When

Quicker than I can tell you, he had cut the laces of his shoes, kicked them off, and jumped into that awful stream of yellow water, and was swimming for the girl. The buggy hadn't been upset, for a wonder, and she sat on the seat, clenching the reins tight in her hands as she floated down the stream, her face as white as a ghost and actually scared out of her senses, her eyes looking straight ahead, but seeing nothing.

The force of the current was a good deal stronger than Hank thought it was, and it rolled and tumbled him over and over a hundred times, it seemed to him, before he got to the buggy. He finally reached it all right, however, and not knowing what else to do, climbed up on the seat beside of Lucetta. Just then the horse that had made all the mischief began to struggle, and in a moment the buggy went over and threw them into the water. Hank remembers that just before the buggy upset he heard a frightful crash up-stream, and surmised that the bridge had been carried away, as indeed it had; and that was what caused Hank most of the trouble that was to come. The buggy must have floated down stream much slower than the current was running, and that was natural enough, seeing that it was pretty heavy and the wheels reached down so far, probably, as to drag on the bottom.

Anyway, the pieces of the broken bridge came down enough faster than the buggy, so that just as the young chap had got to swimming strong for the shore, a piece of lumber hit him and knocked both of them clean under the water. Hank told me afterward that he was as clear-headed as ever he was in his life while he was under water, and he remembers perfectly how he came to the surface with Lucetta on his arm. After that he doesn't know what he did, but in some way he got to shore and took Lucetta with him. Then he fainted away with the pain, for the beam that had struck him had broken his left arm. By that time Lucetta had gained her senses, and she called for help till some one came and took them both away. Hank to my house and Lucetta to Graham's.

I thought they'd be reconciled then, but they weren't. Neither would hear



PLUNGED INTO THE MUDDY WATER.

he got to the polytechnic institute, where they turn out engineers in "assorted lots," he found that he couldn't get into the school till he had done a lot of preliminary studying; had to go through a preparatory school or academy and find out about the whole parcel of things he'd never even heard the names of. But he settled down to his work like a good fellow and wrote to me regular. After he'd been a year in the preparatory school, where he was the oldest of the lot, being past 21, he was ready to take the polytechnic examinations all right, and he went through with colors flying. The professors told me he had done more studying and gone faster than anyone they'd ever had in the school before. But it most killed him. It took all the red out of his face; it made his hands white, and the muscles in his arms soft, and I was afraid he was going to die. So I got him to come here for vacation, and here he saw Lucetta again.

He wouldn't have seen her, though, if it hadn't been for the big storm that came up sudden one day in July. Both he and the girl had declared they wouldn't meet for worlds, and I thought best to humor them, particularly as my wife agreed with me that I'd better. Hank was out fishing that day, and it happened that he was under the short bridge not far from Slatertown when the storm came up. Maybe you remember it. Anyway, it was the worst storm we ever had here. It was something like a western cloud-burst. I guess. There was plenty of hail, and the water came down in barrelsful—not drops. It wasn't half an hour before the creek was so full that Hank had to get out from under his shelter in a hurry. In no time he was drenched, and he was wondering where to find cover when he saw a horse and buggy coming on the other side of the stream, as if the evil one was in pursuit, straight for the bridge. One glance showed him it was a runaway, and another that the driver was Lucetta. He saw the horse was coming across the bridge and he braced himself to stop the runaway, but before the bridge was crossed the horse shied suddenly and jumped right into that roaring torrent of muddy water. You know there was no rail to the short bridge. Then Hank showed that he had plenty of nerve, and wasn't afraid of a little flood whether he was somebody or not.

There wasn't half a chance in a thousand for him to save her, and he'd have known it if he'd ever stopped to think, which I don't suppose he did.

Largest Steel Plate.

A steel plate has just been turned out by an English firm that is said to be the largest ever made. After shearing it measures 76 feet 8 inches by 5 feet, and is six-tenths of an inch thick; it is without a flaw and weighs 5½ tons.

HOUSING THE LONDON POOR.

Slum Localities Giving Place to Healthful Tenements.

Americans must turn to Europe if they wish to study the reforms connected with the government to provide better homes for those who can pay but little rent. Of course, the benefits to be gained from more comfortable and healthful tenements for the poor are confined to any one class of the community. The evils of unsuitable and unsanitary surroundings, of disease, dirt and extreme poverty, fall upon a whole city or neighborhood. The entire population may rejoice to see an old rookery swept away to make room for something more wholesome and comfortable, and to let in the purifying sun and air. When some filthy old shell goes down, where misery has been familiar for many years and crime has lurked in its shadow, even a Gradgrind ought to be able to count the economic gains though not concerned about the moral advantages.

The London county council, in co-operation with the local boards of administration of the parishes, is giving more attention to this subject than ever before. Within the last few years important streets have been opened throughout slum localities, a double gain, it will be noticed, for the inhabitants of the crowded city. One of the leading improvements now in hand is in the slum district, 15 acres in extent, around the group of railway stations in Shoreditch. Six thousand people, including many factory laborers, live in this region. Its death rate is 40 per 1,000—more than double the average. The county council is engaged in the work, to occupy two years, of clearing away the noisome tenements and abolishing the crooked, narrow lanes and courts. A fine, new street, 60 feet wide, lined with shops and tenements, will be the approach. It will run into a large central park, from which seven 50-foot streets will radiate. A mound for a band stand in the park will be made from the earth excavated from foundations.

In this improvement no less than 730 wretched houses, occupied by 5,700 people, have been cleared away. The tenants thus dispossessed have been provided with homes in neat cottages conveniently located, under the direct supervision of the London officials. A tenant now pays for a new two or three room flat from \$1.25 to \$2.50 a week, and for a four-room flat, with an outlook on the mound, three dollars a week. One rule enforced by the council is that rents shall not exceed the old average collected in the rookeries, and the officials expect that the new order of things will pay steam laundry, to be used by families in common on the payment of a small fee. The laundry building has two large rooms to afford pleasant quarters to a workmen's club. On the area to be rebuilt sanitary dwellings will be erected to accommodate 4,700 persons.

The net cost of clearing this large slum district and preparing the site anew is \$1,400,000. About \$1,300,000 additional will be expended on the new dwellings. In 60 years the council expects to have paid off all the debt incurred in the undertaking and to be the free owner of the whole area, without calling on taxpayers for any of the money used in rebuilding. Some of the private philanthropists of London are active in a similar line of reform, one of them having lately erected a large lodging-house for men in needy circumstances. But only a municipality can handle the slum problem in a large way, and what London has already accomplished deserves general attention.

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

COSTLY TRAVELING.

Big Outlay on a Trip Across the Continent.

One of Boston's well-known tourist agents was in a reminiscent mood the other day and related a number of remarkable incidents that had come under his observation during the time he had been connected with his present line of business. Perhaps the most interesting one related to a visit he had not long ago from a comparatively young man, who appeared to be in a great hurry. He rushed into the office of the agency and without ado inquired the cost of a private palace coach to southern California and back. The suddenness of this somewhat extraordinary request almost took the breath out of the agent and it was a moment or two before he collected himself to make reply.

"All for yourself?" inquired the agent.

"Yes, all for myself," with an air of indifference.

"I can't give you the exact figures, but I should say between \$15,000 and \$16,000."

"That's all right. I shall want it next Thursday morning fully equipped for the long journey."

"What name, please?"

The young man passed the agent his card and without further question the bargain was consummated.

A month afterward the agent received a check from his affluent customer for \$18,000, with an accompanying note to the effect that the trip had been greatly enjoyed and that the price was every way satisfactory.

"You see," continued the agent, "that occasionally we get a windfall and that our wealthy people are bound to get the best that's going at whatever cost."—Boston Herald.

Kind-Hearted People.

Eastern Man (looking for a new location)—What kind of a population have you here?

Dugout City Resident—Best sort, mister. I just tell you there ain't no softer-hearted people west of the Missouri than lives in this ere community.

"Benevolent, eh?"

"Benevolent? Just runnin' over with the milk of human kindness. Why, six at our lynchin' bees we allers gives the feller the choice of hangin' or shootin'."

—N. Y. Weekly.

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FULL stock of Fruit and Ornamental

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